VIII

Troy

In his treatment of the *Metamorphoses* Wilkinson makes the following observation: "The organization of this immense work (longer than the *Aeneid* or *Paradise Lost*) must have been a great labour, but we may be sure that it had a fascination for the author, solving his jigsaw-puzzle, far greater than it can have for us, who merely survey the completed picture". And he compares with the "elaborate chiastic symmetry of themes in Catullus LXVIII B, so pretty when set out in a diagram, so bewildering when we read the poem" [1]. The truth of this observation seems to depend on the word "fascination". It is likely enough—although it must remain unsubstantiated—that Ovid enjoyed composing his poem and that part of the pleasure was the creation of very complicated and variously entangled patterns of composition. And it is true that it is often less amusing to unravel and describe Ovid's numerous compositional tricks than simply to read and enjoy the ποικιλία of the *Metamorphoses.* It is a matter of taste whether one finds diagrams like Brooks Otis' sectional and other plans pretty or not. Personally I am not fascinated by their beauty. They are not, however, meant to be beautiful; their function is to answer questions about the compositional structure of the poem, and they may sometimes be helpful. Yet I have avoided the use of such diagrams because in one extremely important respect they cannot but be misleading —at least when the problem is stated as it is in this book, where we are not concerned with the question how Ovid constructed his jigsaw-puzzle but with the probable or possible effect or effects upon his readers: such diagrams give the impression of something static, like the façade of a building, where the general symmetry or the mutual correspondence between the main structural elements impose themselves on the beholder. Wilkinson's implicit comparison between the *Metamorphoses* and a picture suffers from the same awkwardness. The perspective of a reader is not like that of a bird which looks down upon a landscape in its totality, but bears a closer resemblance to that of a wanderer to whom the landscape reveals

itself in constantly changing views as he moves along. He cannot see ever
thing at the same time. A reader of the *Metamorphoses* is always readir
a particular passage and his experience of that detail is determined by h
recollections, associations, and expectations as they are stimulated by tl
text he is actually reading. As these stimuli are constantly changing wit
the changes in tone, style, treatment, tempo, and motifs the reader wi
find that the relevant background, *i. e.* the passages which may be parallel
antitheses, variations, *etc.* is changing, too. That is certainly bewilderin
but not in an unpleasant way, and, as a matter of fact, this very b
wilderment is an important part of the game. The poem must cause su
prise in the reader. What prevents this surprise from becoming confusio
and frustration is in part the fact that the single stories are good an
entertaining in themselves; their relation to other parts of the poem is a
additional and important charm, but the reader may decide himself t
what extent he wants to experience it. The plans of the *Metamorphos*
are not of such a kind that the reader, if he fails to see them, does n
derive any benefit from his reading; they are possibilities which may giv
his benefit a new dimension. Towards the end of the chapter in whic
Brooks Otis gives his main outline of his plan of Ovid's epic, we find th
remark that "it is only by bearing this structure in mind that we ca
properly understand the poem in detail" [2]. That seems to me to reflec
the immortal dream of a universal key—and the joy of a critic who think
that he has found it. I do not, however, think that Otis' plan is not a reality
but that should be understood in the sense that it is a real possibility, ope
to the reader who chooses to concentrate upon the movement of theme
in the poem. But it seems obvious to me that Otis' plan far more obviou
to the reader of his book than it is when one is actually reading the *Meta
morphoses* [3]. That is not, perhaps, as bad as it sounds. Fortunately ar
may work even when its secrets remain secret. The effect of diagonal com
position in a painting—*e. g.* in Tizian's "Paul III and his nephews"—wil
not be lost on those who have never heard of such a thing and fail t
recognize it consciously. So Otis' plan may nevertheless be effective. It is not
however, the only possible division of the poem. Few readers would fai
to see that Ovid has kept his promise to let the poem proceed chronologi
cally from beginning to end, not in every detail—that would of cours
have been impossible—but still in such a way that the reader never lose
the feeling of chronological progress. On the basis of this chronolog
Martini [4] sees the *Metamorphoses* as falling into three symmetric
main sections, *viz.* books I–V (the oldest myths until Cadmus and Pe
seus), books VI–X (the era of Hercules), and books XI–XV (Troy an

Rome). Crump [5] and after her Wilkinson [6] arrive at a different division from a different point of view: After an introduction, the Creation and Flood (I, 5–451) the first part of the poem deals mainly with gods (I, 452–VI, 420), the second with heroes and heroines (VI, 421–XI 193), and the third with what Greeks and Romans regarded as historical personnages (XI, 194–XV, 870). Walter Kraus [7], too, identifies the fundamental principle of composition in the *Metamorphoses* with the historical-chronological scheme; but as he thinks that this is only a peg upon which Ovid has hung what he wanted [8] he refrains from establishing a schematic plan. Kraus seems to regard similarity of motif, as *e. g.* divine vengeance as something incidental and both geography and genealogy are to him external devices, creating an illusion of sectional unity, rather than real unifying elements of composition. Walter Ludwig draws attention to the fact that the more serious Greek historiography—Herodotus, Thucydides, Ephorus, and others—established a separation between mythical and historical time, of which only the latter lends itself to historical treatment [9]. But there was another tradition, too, going back, perhaps, to Hellanicus: authors like Zoilus of Amphipolis, who wrote—in three books—a ἱστορία ἀπὸ θεογονίας ἕως τῆς Φιλίππου τελευτῆς, and Anaximenes of Lampsacus, who started his Hellenica ἀπὸ θεογονίας καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ludwig shows that this trend seems to have had a vogue in the first century B. C. with Castor of Rhodes, Diodorus, Timagenes of Alexandria, and Nicolaus of Damascus. This "universalhistorische Vorstellungsschema" was introduced in Rome by Varro in his *De gente populi Romani* and followed up by Pompeius Trogus. Ludwig continues: "Die Welle dieser universalgeschichtlichen Darstellungen entsprach offensichtlich einem Zeitbedürfnis. Die kosmopolitisch denkende Stoa legte eine universelle Betrachtungsweise nahe. Vor allem aber mochte man gerade jetzt nach solchen Darstellungen verlangen, wo das römische Reich gewissermassen zum Ziel der Weltentwicklung geworden war und die meisten Staaten des *orbis terrarum* in ihm aufgegangen waren.

"Es ist ungewohnt, in diesem Zusammenhang die Metamorphosen Ovids zu sehen. Man hat oft betont, dass der Gedanke, die Dichtung chronologisch *a prima origine mundi ad tempora Augusti* zu ordnen, sein Eigentum war. In der Tat wurde er auch nicht durch irgendeine andere griechische oder römische Dichtung vorweggenommen. Er scheint Ovid durch die Universalgeschichtsschreibung nahegebracht worden zu sein. Ovid wollte als Dichter etwas für die Dichtung erfüllen, was die Universalhistoriker im Bereich der Geschichtsschreibung leisteten. Von dort dürfte

nach allem auch die Anregung zu der fundamentalen Disposition de *Metamorphosen* in jene drei Zeiträume der Urzeit, der mythischen un der historischen Zeit stammen, da eine derartige Periodisierung in de Historiographie seit langem üblich war, wenn auch die Grenzlinien i einzelnen dort teilweise etwas anders gezogen wurden.

"So ist die Grenze zwischen dem *spatium mythicum* und dem *spatiun historicum* bei Ovid etwas zugunsten des letzteren verschoben. Die Früh geschichte Trojas hatte man immer zum Mythos gerechnet, und bei Varr hatte die historische Zeit gar erst mit der Gründung Roms begonnen. Ovi nahm die Verschiebung vor, da er die Entwicklung von Troja bis zun Rom seiner Gegenwart als einen einheitlichen und zielgerichteten Ablau schildern wollte. Er konnte es um so mehr, als er ja auch die "historische Zeit nicht in ihrer historischen Faktizität darstellte, sondern als Dichte mythisierte, womit er gewissermassen den umgekehrten Weg ging, wie di Historiker, die die mythische Zeit zu historisieren suchten.

"Die "Urzeit" liess Ovid in Gegensatz zu Varro bis zur deukalioni schen Flut reichen, da er die ogygische Flut wohl als Dublette nich berücksichtigte und auch die Flut des Deukalion ja als eines der älte sten Ereignisse der Menschheitsgeschichte galt. Für Thukydides ware τὰ πρὸ Ἕλληνος τοῦ Δευκαλίωνος als älteste Zeit ausserhalb seines historio graphischen Blickfeldes geblieben".

Ludwig divides the *Metamorphoses* into 12 *Grossteile* of which the firs is the *Urzeit* (I, 5–451) the next seven the *Mythische Zeit* (2: I, 452–II 835; 3: II, 836–IV, 606; 4: IV, 607–V, 249; 5: V, 250–VI, 420; 6: VI 421–IX, 97; 7: IX, 1–446; 8: IX, 447–XI, 193), and the last four th *Historische Zeit* (9: XI, 194–795; 10: XII, 1–XIII, 622; 11: XIII, 623- XIV, 440; 12: XIV, 441–XV, 870). He sees in the parallel with th tradition of universal historiography a decisive confirmation of this dispo sition. From our point of view Ludwig's results are important becaus they are not only based upon analysis of the poem itself but also take int account a literary tradition which would have made it natural for Ovid' readers to recognize universal history as a working principle in the Meta morphoses. Ludwig's analyses of his single sections are very short. It i no wonder, then, that a number of problems and important details ar dealt with only summarily or not at all. But it should be noted that simultaneously and independently of Ludwig, Hans-Bodo Guthmüller [10 arrived at very similar conclusions for some parts of the poem, thoug starting on another basis. By means of three longer passages Guthmülle shows how carefully Ovid makes his stories fit to each other and join them into bigger complexes. The three passages are: V, 250–VI, 411, IX

447–XI, 84, and XIII, 623–XIV, 608, *i. e.* almost the same as Ludwig's sections 5, 8, and 11. Otis, in his preface to the first edition of his book, first makes the very correct statement that Ludwig's plan is very different from his own and then proceeds to reconcile the two plans at least to some extent: "Nevertheless when some of his sections are taken together (*e. g.* the first two or the last three) their plans reveal a close resemblance to my own "plan" for those particular portions of the poem" [11]. But it is not the case that there is only one correct solution to the problem of composition in the *Metamorphoses.* There are many. And which one is relevant depends upon the approach, and which approach is most rewarding depends again upon the character of the stories or of the nuclei of the stories. Sometimes genealogy is most important, sometimes an interrelation of motifs, sometimes traditional chronology, sometimes variation of tempo, sometimes the establishment of a common frame for several stories. It should be noted, however, that in most cases there are several of these factors at work simultaneously. What makes the *Metamorphoses* difficult to analyze is not the absence of coherence but the multiplicity of the means by which it is established and the resulting multiplicity of possible interpretations. It seems that the time has not yet come to unveil the deepest secrets of Ovid's compositional art in the *Metamorphoses.* That, perhaps, is not so strange. Ovid did not comment as much upon his own poetic principles as did other Augustans. But he seems to have had as his leading maxim the *ars est celare artem* [12]. And his elusive virtuosity has indeed been very successful in this respect. That has not always been good for his reputation with critics, who often found themselves frustrated in their attempt to discover his real face behind all the masks and find out what he really stands for in his nimble play with everything around him. His non-professional readers, it should always be remembered, were under no obligation to analyze but content to enjoy what they read. And we should not forget the fact that most poems—and most certainly amongst them the *Metamorphoses*—were always written primarily for the reader and only in the second place, if at all, for the scholars to write books about them. That does not mean, of course, that literary studies should be abandoned as being irrelevant but only that experience and analysis are different things and that it may be to the scholar's own advantage not to ignore that fact. The progress made towards a better understanding of the *Metamorphoses* during the last generations has come about through thorough and painstaking analyses of the single parts of the poem. But there is still very much in this huge work which has not yet received adequate and detailed interpretation. There is a good reason for v. Albrecht's resignation: "Erst auf einer breiten Erfahrungsgrundlage, die nu
durch genaue Einzelinterpretation zu gewinnen ist, wird sich ein Gesamtbild des Aufbaus der "Metamorphosen" zeichnen lassen, das über di
Gewaltsamkeiten einer vorwiegend "technischen" Betrachtungsweise erhaben ist" [13].

Comparatively little work has been done in this field as far as the las
books of the *Metamorphoses* are concerned. The first books have generall
received a fuller treatment than the last ones. This may be due to th
width of the whole work. But it also seems as if the last portion of th
poem has appealed less to scholars than the first part and there is som
agreement that Ovid is at his best in the beginning and has not been quit
able to keep up the standard to the end of his work. Wilkinson admit
that there are fine things in the last four books but according to him th
decline in quality begins with book XII, "in which we are aware of
conscious effort to raise the poem into a "higher" strain" [14]. But h
wisely keeps open the possibility that Roman readers might have reacte
differently [15]. Yet his general verdict on the end of the *Metamorphose*
is—to use his own eloquent words—that "the sap of Augustan spring like the dew of Hellenic dawn, has dried up" [16].

Fraenkel agrees with Wilkinson in saying that with the Twelfth Boo
the epic changes its character. He continues: "No longer does the autho
delight us with a bountiful sequence of tender and sentimental fables
most of them short, a few more leisurely than the rest, but all of the
moderate in length, intense in feeling, and graceful in presentation. Enchanting caprice gives way to an ambition for grandeur. The writer begin
to insert massive compositions, each of them devoted to a single subject
Trying his hand at the truly epic manner of epic, he now spends thre
hundred hexameters on a description of Lapiths and Centaurs slaughterin
one another (in the Twelfth Book), and four hundred lines on a bitte
debate, with tragic consequences, between two great heroes of legend (i
the Thirteenth). Competing with historical epic, he recounts patrioti
legends (in Book 14), and in his last book he expounds in full a philosophical doctrine. What, then, has Ovid accomplished in his last four books
And how, in the first place, does the break make itself felt when i
occurs?" [17]. Fraenkel's answer to these questions is that the shift fro
Venus to Mars though explicitly marked by Ovid himself [18] is no
adequately justified by that, and that with only a partial success Ovi
tried something which was really alien to his talent and character: wa
and fighting and sublimity of subject and treatment. He was sacrificin
too much to buy variety of manner and heroic grimness. Besides that h

had to conquer another difficulty: the Italian raw material was uncouth and needed a higher degree of refinement than did the already refined Greek mythology so that Ovid was obliged to draw more heavily upon his own ingenuity for the construction of plots, to say nothing of the finer elaboration [19].

A very similar evaluation is found in Brooks Otis' book. His fourth section has an "obvious and pleasing symmetry in the arrangement; an evident continuity of movement and theme is combined with a refreshing variety. Epic, oratory and tragedy at the beginning; religion and philosophy at the end: the shift of moral and tone is both piquant and refreshing. But in another sense the section is contrived and factitious in a way that belies the extraordinarily subtle and natural movement of the preceding section. The gradual development of motifs up to the crowning *Ceyx and Alcyone,* the deft transition from the comedy of the first section to the vengeance of the second and the amatory pathos of the third or from the humorous metamorphoses of Daphne and Io to the pathetic metamorphoses of Procne, Byblis, etc.—all this is now suddenly abandoned in favour of a quite artificial pastiche of bravura pieces. The epic contest of Centaurs and Lapiths, the tragedy of Hecuba, the amusingly Theocritian song of Polyphemus, the clever oratory of Ulysses and longwinded philosophy of Pythagoras have only the most formal relation to each other. They are not assimilated to the whole; they have no true reason for being where they are. There is a plan that unites them, but it is, after all, a quite external and superficial one" [20]. Otis sees in Ovid's Augustan pretensions the reason why the plan does not really work in this section. These pretensions are again explained by a reference to the poet's supposed intention of pleasing or at least mollifying the Emperor [21]. But Otis keeps open the possibility that Ovid has not expected all his readers to take his epic-patriotic conclusion at its face value. The final words of his chapter on this section bring up again all the questions which the chapter has tried to answer. They are: "Whatever he (Ovid) was, he was not naive".

It is, then, the prevailing modern opinion about the last books of the *Metamorphoses* that they have not come off very well, both when taken by themselves and when compared with the preceding part of the poem. A closer analysis of a larger portion of the poem might perhaps say something about the point of view from which these last books can be appreciated.

There would have been nothing surprising for Roman readers, not even those who were only moderately well educated, in the fact that the character of the *Metamorphoses* had to undergo some change at the point where the poet arrives at "historical" time. The history of Troy was writte by Homer, once and for all. And Vergil, the new classic and Homer's peer had firmly established Troy as the background and source of Rome an her greatness. There was no other way leading from the world of Gree mythology to imperial Rome than that: Vergil's truth was an accomplishe fact. The *Aeneid* was there before the *Metamorphoses,* and nobody woul have expected Ovid to question the authority of the Poet. From the beginning of Troy the factual framework was given in advance. It is natural consequence that whereas so far the novelty about the *Metamorphoses*—or one of them—had been the creation of coherence and continuity out of an exuberant mythical jungle, it would now have to b almost the opposite: to arrange a number of new things or old thing viewed from new angles around an established line of development.

The lines in which Troy is introduced are very epic and loaded wit heavy epic adjectives and proper names:

> *Ultus abit Tmolo liquidumque per aera vectus*
> *angustum citra pontum Nepheleidos Helles*
> *Laomedonteis Latoius adstitit arvis.*
> *Dextera Sigei, Rhoetei laeva profundi*
> *ara Panomphaeco vetus est sacrata Tonanti.*
> *Inde novae primum moliri moenia Troiae*
> *Laomedonta videt susceptaque magna labore*
> *crescere difficili nec opes exposcere parvas*
> *cumque tridentigero tumidi genitore profundi*
> *mortalem induitur formam Phrygiaeque tyranno*
> *aedificat muros pactus pro moenibus aurum* [22].

The transition in itself is trivial enough. Apollo flies from one scene t another. Here again the reason why the transition feels quite natural i that it expresses an acceptable progression and variation of motif. When Bacchus had punished the maenads who killed Orpheus he leaves the scene of the crime [23]. The change of scene is quite justified by this. Apollo's departure from Tmolus [24] is a parallel: Apollo punishes Mida and then leaves both his victim and his country. The parallel makes the transition seem less arbitrary than it "actually" is. Apollo not only move as the poet obviously wants him to but also as the reader has been prepared to expect him to move. Besides, the reader is taken from one vengeance-episode to another: Both King Midas and King Laomedon have to pay for their greediness and stupidity. The punishment of Laomedon recalls two of the major episodes from the first part of the poem, *viz.* the *Flood:*

> *"Non impune feres" rector maris inquit et omnes*
> *inclinavit aquas ad avarae litora Troiae*
> *inque freti formam terras complevit opesque*
> *abstulit agricolis et fluctibus obruit agros* [25]

and the *Perseus:*

> *Poena neque haec satis est: regis quoque filia monstro*
> *poscitur aequoreo* [26].

Hercules, like Perseus, frees her, but unlike him he is defrauded of his reward and destroys Troy. And Hercules knew how to reward loyal service: he gave Telamon the princess. That was all the more welcome because his brother Peleus was already most honourably married to Thetis [27]. To this rapid and, as it seems, effortless transition from the foundation and first fall of Troy to the gay affair of Peleus and Thetis corresponds a gradual attenuation of the elevated epic style in the beginning to the almost chattering editorial comment in the end:

> *nec avi magis ille (sc. Peleus) superbus*
> *nomine quam soceri, siquidem Iovis esse nepoti*
> *contigit haud uni, conjunx dea contigit uni* [28].

This attenuation begins with the mentioning of the costs of the construction of the walls. That is the usual Ovidian epic deflation by modernization. Hard toil has an epic value and respectability, which costs of construction have not. Heroes are not bothered by bills. Ovid, as often, very discretely suggests his point. The fun begins when the reader develops it for himself [29]. But this modernization would also direct the readers mind towards Rome, and so hint that there is a connection between the foundations of the two cities.

With the *Peleus and Thetis* we return to the old divine comedy once again [30]. Like so many fairy-tales it begins with a prophecy [31]. Thetis is told by Proteus that she shall give birth to a

> *iuvenis qui fortibus actis*
> *acta patris vincet maiorque vocabitur illo* [32].

Ovid leaves it to the reader's imagination to find out how Jupiter learned about the prophecy; in any case Thetis might have stopped his advances

effectively by telling him about it. Jupiter's precautions against the threat follow immediately:

> *ergo ne quicquam mundus Jove maius haberet,*
> *quamvis haud tepidos sub pectore senserat ignes,*
> *Jupiter aequoreae Thetidis conubia fugit*
> *in suaque Aeaciden succedere vota nepotem*
> *iussit et amplexus in virginis ire marinae.*

The fruit of this connection will be Achilles, the destroyer of Troy; his birth is then appropriately placed in the beginning of that development which ends with Augustus, the redeemer of Rome. He too surpassed his father's *acta* by his own and is explicitly compared to Achilles in that respect [33]. But as Achilles had to have a mortal father in order not to become a god, so Augustus had to have a divine father in order to be more than a mortal:

> *ne foret hic igitur mortali semine cretus*
> *ille deus faciendus erat* [34].

The movement from Troy to Rome starts with the hero of war *par excellence,* a destroyer of cities, and ends with the architect of the Roman Empire. That is very Augustan, of course, but just that little too much of a *tour de force* which diverts the reader's attention from the message itself to the ingenuity with which it is brought about. Ovid is too clever. The Augustan truth was so well-established by Ovid's predecessors, and more than those twenty years had elapsed which—according to Dr. Relling—suffice to wear out an average truth and turn it into a triviality. There was no point in repeating it once more. But there is always a point in playing with established values.

The *Peleus and Thetis* is yet another good example of the duplex nature of many Ovidian stories. It is well-told in itself and can be read and enjoyed without Homer and Vergil in mind. But there is a refined interplay with models to be enjoyed by those who want it. Ovid knows how to satisfy both the common reader and the literary gourmet at the same time.

The names of Troy and Achilles would arouse in readers the expectation that now comes the Trojan war. But Ovid is in no hurry. Achilles must have time to grow up and there is much to be told in the meantime. The usual version of Peleus' store was that he married *after* the murder of Phocus and his purification for that. Ovid turns this pattern upside down and by that simple trick a whole nucleus of stories becomes available as a means of retardation before the Trojan war. The fratricide has to seek refuge with King Ceyx [35] who was at that time mourning the loss of his own brother. As Peleus asks him he tells the story of Daedalion and his daughter Chione. He anticipates the metamorphosis: his warlike brother has become a hawk. This points forward to Ceyx' own transformation into a bird which corresponds equally well to his character [36]. Then follows the story, which in the beginning is again divine erotic comedy:

> *Nata erat huic Chione, quae dotatissima forma*
> *mille procos habuit, bis septem nubilis annis.*
> *Forte revertentes Phoebus Maiaque creatus,*
> *ille suis Delphis, hic vertice Cylleneo,*
> *videre hanc pariter, pariter traxere calorem.*
> *Spem veneris differt in tempora noctis Apollo;*
> *non fert ille moras virgaque movente soporem*
> *virginis os tangit: tactu iacet illa potenti*
> *vimque dei patitur; nox caelum sparserat astris:*
> *Phoebus anum simulat praereptaque gaudia sumit* [37].

By Mercurius Chione became pregnant with Autolycus—who, being the grandfather of Ulysses, establishes the link with Troy—and by Apollo with Philammon who recalls Orpheus. But like Niobe her pride induced her to compete with a goddess and Diana—for she it was—killed her with an arrow through the tongue. In his distress Daedalion runs amok and finally throws himself from the top of Mount Parnassus. His reaction and ensuing metamorphosis has close parallels in Alcyone's transformation and in that of Aesacus and is more distantly reminiscent of Ino, Scylla Nisi, and Perdix.

When Ceyx has finished his tale the Phocaean Onetor comes rushing in with bad news. This character is obviously Ovid's invention, and it allows him to keep the *Daedalion and Chione* within the same frame as the *Peleus and the wolf* [38]. Onetor is as verbose as any tragic messenger and there is a certain incongruity between the obvious need for quick action and this otiose message with all its dispensable details. The three last lines of the messenger's speech underscore this fact. Ovid invites his readers to smile at the literary conventions about *Botenberichte.* Peleus understands at once that the wolf has been sent by Psamathe, Phocus' mother. Ceyx reacts as befits a heroic king:

> *Induere arma viros violentaque sumere tela*
> *rex iubet Oetaeus; cum quis simul ipse parabat*
> *ire, sed Alcyone coniunx excita tumultu*
> *prosilit et nondum totos ornata capillos*
> *disicit hos ipsos colloque infusa mariti,*
> *mittat ut auxilium sine se, verbisque precatur*
> *et lacrimis, animasque duas ut servet in una.*
> *Aeacides illi: "Pulchros, regina, piosque*
> *pone metus! Plena est promissi gratia vestri.*
> *Non placet arma mihi contra nova monstra moveri:*
> *numen adorandum pelagi est".* [39]

After that Peleus' prayers—and Thetis' intervention—brings the ravaging of the wolf to an end. Alcyone's appearance is superfluous for the action here. Its function is to prepare the reader for the following drama of Ceyx and Alcyone. The character of Alcyone and the nature of Ceyx and her own conjugal feelings are presented *in nuce* in these few lines. The reader knows that Ceyx' mobilization order cannot be an expression of a warlike temper but must stem from what he feels to be his duty as a host—especially when the guest is such a great hero as Peleus. And Peleus understands it precisely in that way [40]. The intensity of Alcyone's pathos is clear from the fact that she rushes forward in the middle of doing her hair. When Peleus' arrival was reported she must have retired in order to dress up to the nines. Alcyone's hair has nettled commentators. So Korn-Ehwald [41] gravely remarks: "Der Zug passt wohl für eine um ihre Toilette besorgte Römische Modedame, aber nicht für eine Heroine". I do not think that the frame of reference here is Roman high society or fashionable ladies. Alcyone has apparently done exactly what a bourgeois wife typically does when a business-friend of her husband's turns up unexpectedly. Korn-Ehwald is, of course, right in saying that Alcyone's half-done hair is out of normal epic character. But it may prove more profitable to assume that Ovid knew what he was doing than to see in this line a *lapsus* of a poet who did not always know how to control his own wit [42]. In the *Aeneid,* too, there is an incongruity between the heroic setting and action and the humanity of the characters. Vergil did not solve the problem because it could not be solved, but he kept the balance between traditional heroic conventions and the human reality of his own days, which was far more bourgeois than heroic. Dido is a mythical heroine and queen but yet her passion and behaviour were familiar to Roman readers from their own lives. But Vergil does not permit his reader to become too deeply and too disturbingly aware of that fact, and so his poem remains sublime. Ovid apparently insists that his reader must understand that in spite of all epic gear and mythological remoteness Ceyx is a good man and husband and Alcyone a nice and affectionate *matrona,* exactly like many Romans of his own day. It does not really matter that Ceyx is a king and Alcyone a queen. Their story could very well be the family tragedy of, say, a Roman corn-dealer. Vergil conquers the inherent incongruity, Ovid exploits it.

The transition to the *Ceyx and Alcyone* is in itself rather violent. Fate does not permit Peleus to stay: he must leave for Acastus for purification, and there Ovid leaves him and starts the new story with an *interea.* But the real transition was the Alcyone-scene. The *Ceyx and Alcyone* is treated in great detail by Brooks Otis [43], who demonstrates the freedom with which Ovid changed what he found in his sources and shows how carefully Ovid has balanced the composition of this long episode. In spite of all the merits of the analysis—and there are many—Otis is obviously dominated by the idea of establishing his plan of Ovid's epic, and that is not the only important thing in this elusive poet with his multifarious ambiguity. To Otis the episode is "essentially an epic [44]: its vocabulary, set speeches and descriptions or *ekphraseis,* as well as its very amplitude and symmetry, all make this plain" [45]. And as a matter of fact Otis makes most of the serious and epic features and ignores that humour and unepic playfulness, the irony, which—taken together with the epicism—produces that essential Ovidianism which is present throughout the whole episode. It is true, of course, that the *Somnus-ecphrasis* with its extreme calm and quietness counterbalances the violent sea-storm. But it is hardly an adequate description of the atmosphere to say, as Otis does [46], that in this passage only "a light and muted, but still undubitable, humour plays over the whole scene". Who would have failed to smile when Iris has to remove with her hands those innumerable dreams which encumber the entrance to King Sleep's palace [47]? when her rainbow-garment enlightens the dim cave? when Sleep reluctantly manages to "shake himself off"? when Iris has to leave in a hurry because otherwise she will fall asleep herself? when the dreamgods are as many and as specialized as the servants of a Roman millionaire? Nor is it true to say that Ovid's humour is in abeyance in the storm [48]. The description of the storm itself is quite epic but its effects on the sailors and Ceyx contain some hints to the sophisticated reader. As observed by Bernbeck [49], who deals with this passage under the heading: *Sonstige groteske Verbindungen,* the illusion may be somewhat broken by the poets' aside sin 541:

> *bracchiaque ad caelum, quod non videt, inrita tollens* [50].

Ceyx calls upon his father and father-in-law, *i. e.* Lucifer and Aeolus, an although it is logical enough for him to invoke these *necessarios,* the us of words denoting human family relations where gods are concerned always more or less productive of that humoristic effect which is clea when Ovid calls Cupido the cousin of Augustus [51]. But the invocatio is in vain:

> *nam* [52] *plurima nantis in ore est*
> *Alcyone coniunx.*

Ceyx' invocations are frustrated—not by the water he swallows as on might easily have believed after the first line—but because he must ca out his wife's name again and again. The following lines show that eve this is very difficult: the waves prevent him from opening his mouth; bu yet, even into the water, he mumbles her name:

> *dum natat, absentem, quotiens sinit hiscere fluctus,*
> *nominat Alcyonen ipsisque inmurmurat undis.*

To this Bernbeck remarks: "Durch diese Übertreibungen, die real ga nicht mehr vorstellbar sind, wird die anfangs grossartig aufgebaute Erns der Szene wieder zerstört und in ein groteskes Spiel aufgelöst" [53]. Tha is perhaps too much. Bernbeck's main thesis is that Ovid is only a "Dichte einer Spätzeit, in der die überlieferten Formen zerfliessen und die bekann ten Sagenstoffe zum Gegenstand des Spiels werden", and that his poem i "mehr Reflex der Auseinandersetzung mit älteren Vorbildern als schöpfe rische Gestaltung eines neuen Weltbildes" [54]. The attempt to establis this thesis gives Bernbeck's Ceyx a bias opposite to that of Otis. But th Ovidian truth may be that life is *both* heroic *and* comic. It is not alway adequate to ask an ironist what he means; the point of his irony may b that he honestly means more than one thing at the same time.

The *Ceyx and Alcyone* is a retarding intermezzo in the composition The reader was led away from Troy via Peleus and his visit to Ceyx. Th *Daedalion and Chione* and the *Aesacus* constitute, as Otis says, the end pieces of the *Ceyx and Alcyone.* The transition to the later is somewha factitious: somebody sees the transformed king and queen flying over th sea and recounts a parallel [55]. But it should be noted that the paralle is also close to the *Daedalion and Chione.* The *Aesacus* brings us bac to that Troy which the *Daedalion and Chione* led us away from. Th names of Priamus and Hector appear here for the first time. With the en of Book XI we are on the eve of the Trojan war. The preparation for it has been so careful that few readers would have realized that they were passing from one world to another, from myth to history (in the ancient meaning of that word). Ovid has maintained the continuity of his poem at this decisive point.

Book XII starts with a transition from the *Aesacus.* Hector and his brothers make him a cenotaph and perform the funeral rites. Only Paris is not there [56]. He returns later with Helen and the war. But the Greeks are delayed in Aulis. Ovid makes as little as possible of this delay. He simplifies dramatically the story of the Κύπρια by taking the *Draco Aulidensis* and the *Iphigenia*—which together occupy only twentyeight lines—in immediate succession and ignoring the first departure, the fighting in Mysia and the storm which scattered the Greek fleet and made a new departure necessary. What is left of all this are the two words *multa perpessae* in l. 38 where the Greeks land on Phrygia's coast.

Here Ovid breaks off and gives a new ecphrasis, *viz.* of *Fama* and her abode. The function of that is clear enough: she tells the Trojans about the arriving Greeks. The obvious model of reading and writing for this passage is Vergil's *Fama* in the fourth *Aeneid.* But where Vergil describes Fama herself as a fantastic monster, Ovid concentrates on the place, as he did with *Invidia* [57], *Fames* [58], and *Somnus* [59]. In Vergil the ecphrasis is well motivated in the narrative. Dido's loss of her reputation is one of the outstanding features in her tragedy. In Ovid there is an obvious incongruity between the amplitude of the ecphrasis—it is much longer than Vergil's—and the trivial part which Fama plays in the context. By isolating an epic element and making it *Selbstzweck* Ovid has achieved a certain anti-epic effect. He is playing with the form. Besides there may be a good-natured criticism of Vergil in Ovid's *Fama.* In the *Aeneid* Fama blends true and false, we are told, when she disseminates the news about Dido and Aeneas; but her actual report is strictly in accordance with truth. Ovid on the one hand stresses Fama's unreliability and on the other the actual veracity of her message. By being in this respect more awkward than Vergil he draws attention to the fact that there *is* an awkwardness—in Vergil. So it seems that here the traditional form of a classic predecessor is used to direct a good-humoured criticism against this form itself. There is a point in the apparent lack of function in the context. But we should not leave it at that. The *Fama*-ecphrasis *has* an important function in the economy of the *Metamorphoses.* It is a close parallel and antithesis to the *Somnus*-ecphrasis: Sleep lives far away in a deep cave, Rumour on the summit in the very centre of the whole world.

There are no doors in Sleep's palace—they might make a noise—nor a
there any in Rumour's—they might keep voices out. Everything is qui
there: *muta quies habitat,* nothing is quiet here: *nulla quies intus.* N
human voices are heard there, all here. As thousands of dreams fill t
house of Sleep, so thousands of rumours fill Fama's *atria.* Some of the
are mentioned by name in both places: all names are Greek in the *Somnu*
ecphrasis, all Latin in the *Fama*-ecphrasis. The two passages togeth
provide another tie to bind the mythical and the historical parts of t
poem together.

After this ecphrasis the fighting begins with the death of Protesilaus an
heavy losses on both sides. That is only the introduction to the fig
between Cygnus and Achilles, which together with Achilles' death will
the only Trojan fighting scene at all in the *Metamorphoses.* Cygnus ran
with Hector [60] and so Achilles' victory is in a way decisive. The co
frontation of the greatest killer with the invulnerable man gives occasio
for such paradoxes that make the story extremely un-Homeric, regardle
of all loans. The two heroes are virtually comical: Cygnus who carries
helmet [61] and a shield as pure ornaments— like Mars himself! Achill
who stands gaping when things do not work as usual [62] and kee
trying again and again even after he has been told that Cygnus is i
vulnerable. He is aptly compared to an enraged bull in the arena, an
his monologue, in which he tries to conquer his alarm by enumerating h
deeds, is reminiscent of a *miles gloriosus* rather than of a Homeric hero
pride. As he cannot after all talk his own doubts away, he tests his strengt
by piercing the poor Menoetes, a trial killing, and then tries again o
Cygnus. And when he finally overcomes his foe by strangling him it
not because he understands anything but because he totally loses h
temper. There is certainly more brawn than brain in this Achilles.

The next 445 lines are occupied by a frame in which Nestor tells abo
the Lapiths and Centaurs and Periclymenus. Then comes the *Mors Achill*
so that Achilles' first victory in Troy and his death are endpieces to t
Nestor-frame. This, as a matter of fact, is so long that the reader readil
accepts that ten years have passed. Ovid has thus avoided the impossib
competition with Homer (and Vergil). The battle of Lapiths and Centau
takes the place of those fights which Ovid could not be expected to d
scribe as he could not be expected to be a Homer or a Vergil. As a them
Lapiths and Centaurs had exactly that uncanny character which wou
allow Ovid to remain Ovid.

In his own sly and indirect manner Ovid prepares his reader for t
confused slaughter and violence of the *Lapiths and Centaurs.* Ovid di

regards the fact that Achilles is known from Homer to have played the cithar. The carnal taste of these men of war is shown with some distaste [63], and of course they do not waste the time on music and song [64] but talk about their battles and perils encountered and endured. Could anybody expect anything but that from the great Achilles or at the great Achilles' table? [65] Cygnus and his invulnerability was of course discussed on this occasion, and old Nestor recalls a parallel, *viz.* Caeneus. His technique of obtaining an invitation from the others to speak about him is very good, and Nestor's general image in literature since Homer makes it quite natural that he confirms the truth of the saying *rogati numquam desinunt.* Ovid seems to disclaim the responsibility for what follows [66]: these warriors *were* like that and Nestor's garrulity was a well-known fact—nothing for Ovid to do about it. Yet the first part of Nestor's speech is true Ovidan divine comedy: How Neptunus raped Caenis, granted her a wish, according to which she became Caeneus and, as an extra favour, invulnerable. Then comes the *Lapiths and Centaurs,* which after 325 lines ends with Caeneus' aresteia, strange death, and ensuing transformation into a bird—like Cygnus.

This long piece has not found favour with modern critics. So Fraenkel calls it "tedious as well as repulsive" and states that "its dull cruelty contrasts with the sensitive manner with which a similar fight was narrated in 5, 1–235" [67]. Otis' verdict is along the same lines except that he does not like the *Perseus–Phineus* (nor the *Meleager*) either. Such statements are a matter of taste and hence always debatable. The important thing here is to note that with the *Lapiths and Centaurs* Ovid is apparently appealing to a particular taste, which he may have believed to be sufficiently common among his potential readers to justify such passages. We can perhaps better understand what taste—or what level of taste—we are dealing with here, when we remember that in our time spaghetti-westerns are popular not only with the crowd but also with a considerable number of intellectuals who enjoy all the spattering of blood, brains, and furniture as a variation of the more respectable but also more jejune psychological art of the screen. The *Metamorphoses* are designed to cover a very broad spectrum of taste.

The *Lapiths and Centaurs* in a way replaces the *Iliad:* yet, as underscored by W. Ludwig [68] a passage of the *Iliad* is "die Keimzelle" [69]. With their paradoxes and ingenious gruesomeness the fights are all very un-Homeric indeed; but almost exactly in the middle of the battle there is one passage which suddenly combines war and fighting with Ovidian love pathos in a way which is both moving and grotesque. There was a young centaur Cyllarus: The description of his beauty, both man and horse, is enchanting and delicate [70]. Many centaur-girls wanted him, but Hylonome [71] alone had won him. She is described as a true female being, with the charming vanity of a young girl happily in love. *Mutatis mutandis* she is the Ovidian ideal of female *cultus.* They were inseparable in their love. Cyllarus was wounded: a little(!) wound—but in the heart. He dies and Hylonome's sorrow and ensuing suicide over his body recalls the *Pyramus and Thisbe.* Nothing could be more moving and more human than these two—centaurs. The effect is dramatically strengthened by the gory and gruesome context. It is almost as if by this contrast Ovid has himself underscored how far the poetic value of love and passion really exceed that of war, traditionally the highest theme of narrative poetry. It seems to me that the *Lapiths and Centaurs* should also be a warning to critics against assigning too much importance to quantity: the fact that some passages are longer than others do not necessarily mean that they are more important in the structure.

As was the case with the *Lapiths and Centaurs* so Nestor's next story has a passage of the *Iliad* as its germ [72], and so has the transition [73]. The *Periclymenus* resumes briefly a number of themes from the portion of the poem which has been discussed in this chapter: He has the faculty of transforming himself into any shape like Thetis; Neptunus is *auctor doni* as he was to Cygnus and Caeneus; the fight between Periclymenus and Hercules recalls both the *Peleus and Thetis* and the *Cygnus:* the super-hero has difficulties with an unusual foe. Periclymenus becomes a bird Daedalion was transformed into a bird as were Ceyx and Alcyone Aesacus, Cygnus and Caeneus; but their transformation in a way saved them from death, while that of Periclymenus proves fatal to him. Finally the detailed description of his death echoes the *Lapiths and Centaurs.*

This rounding off of the whole section from the first mentioning of Troy marks an incision in Ovid's treatment of the *Troica.* The death of Achilles is the motivation for the *Armorum Iudicium.* That a new major movement in the *Metamorphoses* begins at the very end of a book is in accordance with Ovid's usual technique [74].

By inserting this case with its two long speeches Ovid kills two birds with one stone. At the point where the reader might think that he has simply passed over the action of the *Iliad* in silence he proves able to cover that important field, but in a way and from an angle that allows him to remain himself and excludes competition with Homer [75]. At the same time he includes oratory into his universal poem and satisfies his reader' interest in and taste for oratorical display. We should always remembe that the *Metamorphoses* were written at the time when the *declamatores* played a most prominent part in the intellectual climate and—for better or for worse—exerted a profound influence on the taste of their audience. Ovid might feel assured that he would have his reader's attention when he showed his skill in this field. He depicts two contrasting characters and two contrasting types of rhetors; his readers would have had the possibility of comparing Ovid and *e. g.* his teachers Arellius Fuscus and Porcius Latro, whom he admired and from whom he actually has borrowed a *sententia* in this very context [76]. Wilkinson [77] devotes a number of pages to this episode and finds that "Ovid saw to it that Ulysses won heavily on points". According to Wilkinson the poet's sympathy is exclusively on the side of the clever and subtle man of *ingenium* against the dull-witted soldier Ajax. Furthermore Ovid is supposed to have taken a positive stand against the tide by representing Ulysses in a favourable light [78]. It is an open question whether or not Ulysses' general image was so bad; he was also a stoic hero [79] and among his partisans were Horace. And it seems to me rash to conclude,—*a priori,* or even from the fact that Ovid takes up an idea of Latro's in Ajax' speech—that the *declamatores* were always against Ulysses. But these are minor points. The real question is if Ovid's Ulysses is really so positive and his Ajax so negative. Wilkinson admits that "Ovid was too good an artist, and too keen a rhetorician, to give Ajax an ineffective speech. No hint in the *Iliad* is unexploited. The points are commonplace enough, but they are neatly made—so much so as to be out of character". The last statement can only be true if we accept Ulysses' representation of Ajax as valid (and not *vice versa*). But Ajax' character must be established first and foremost from his own words, as must that of Ulysses.

Ajax is *inpatiens irae* and in accordance with this he starts on the argumentation at once without a real introduction: The fleet, which he has saved while Ulysses fled, is his first witness. Ulysses fights with cunning lies, Ajax with shining arms. Ajax is the brave and open hero in contrast to the treacherous and crooked demagogue. He feels a genuine distaste for politicians with all their tricks. His own valour on the battlefield cannot be doubted, while Ulysses' field of action is intrigue and ambush: he is not at all a worthy opponent. Ajax is heroically proud of his parentage which he shares with Achilles. And he scores a good invective point when he discredits that of Ulysses. Ajax did not try to shrink from the fight as did Ulysses. In those parts of his speech where he comments on Philoctetes and Palamedes Ajax is again the honest man who scorns foul play. And he effectively contrasts his opponent who cowardly deserted his friend

Nestor, and himself, who saved Ulysses' life with his shield. Ajax himself twice held his ground against Hector, and he defended the ships. He ends with a spirited invective against Ulysses, and his last point is the adaptation of Latro's *sententia:*

> *arma viri fortis medios mittantur in hostes*
> *inde iubete peti et referentem ornate relatis* [80].

I do not think that Ovid's readers would have had the impression that this Ajax is a stupid man. He is honest and brave, and indignation makes him eloquent. When he is fighting with words, he does so openly, simply by saying what he feels. He is not a trained rhetorician but apparently has a natural talent [81]. His good points are not out of character but part of it. The fact that he, like Ovid in his youth, *sine certo ordine per locos discurrit* [82] is in accordance with his non-professionalism and adds to his credibility. Ulysses seems to be quite aware of this. And is it not quite fair that valiant deeds, not words should decide the matter? After all Achilles was far more of a fighter than a thinker, a *vir fortis* par excellence. By this defense of Ajax I do not pretend to have discovered the whole truth; the important thing to realize is that Ovid's *ethopoiia* allows both a negative ("the blockish soldier") and a positive interpretation ("the honest hero"). Ovid does not tell his reader what to believe. But why should it perforce be an either–or?

The contest is uneven: Ajax is outside his natural element while Ulysses is not. And everybody knew in advance that Ajax was going to lose. Did Ovid justify this result by siding with the winner, by concentrating all sympathy on his side? A closer analysis of Ulysses' speech might reveal that also here Ovid leaves much to his reader to decide or doubt and raises more questions than he answers. Is this the tale of how *ingenium* conquers brutal physical force, or is it a demonstration of how cleverness out-manoeuvres honesty? Or both things at the same time? I think that Ovid was very careful about leaving his readers in doubt as to where his sympathies lie [83]. The effect of Ajax' speech is made clear by the applause from the listening army. But Ajax had forgotten that it was not the army he should persuade but the group of leaders to whom Agamemnon had left the decision. Where Ajax did not take the trouble to adapt his words to the ears of his judges, Ulysses certainly does. Conforming with a rule of rhetoric—of which he is, in a way, the alleged inventor himself [84]—he carefully arouses the expectations of his audience by a studied pause [85]. His next trick is the tactful tribute he pays to the deceased Achilles [86] as an *exordium,* and he heightens the effect by wiping off simulated tears from his eyes. At the same time he displays his own solidarity with his audience, *i. e.* the *proceres.* His *exordium* ends with the very clever—and deceitful—lines:

> *Huic modo ne prosit quod, uti est, hebes esse videtur,*
> *neve mihi noceat, quod vobis semper, Achivi,*
> *profuit ingenium, meaque haec facundia, si qua est,*
> *quae nunc pro domino, pro vobis saepe locuta est,*
> *invidia careat, bona nec sua quisque recuset* [87].

The speech itself has a very careful disposition and Ulysses scores a lot of points, masterly using all available material to further his claim. His technique of isolating Ajax and of enlisting the judges on his own side is excellent: he assumes just that much of the responsibility for the Iphigenia-affair as suits the King [88]. He addresses Menelaus as a witness of their common embassy to Troy [89]. He pays great respect to Diomedes [90]. He blames Ajax for not recognizing other men's valour [91]. He twists the dangerous Palamedes-affair effectively to his own advantage: if he is to blame, so are all the leaders who condemned Palamedes [92]. He does the same thing about Philoctetes so that the leaders would implicitly admit having committed an injustice if they were to make a decision against Ulysses [93]. He offers an acceptable explanation and an honourable excuse for the other leaders not to compete for the weapons: they know of course that they are not second to Ajax in valour, but they have already implicitly recognized the superior value of Ulysses' brains. By way of defending his attempt to avoid participation in the war, he blames Ajax for being tactless against Achilles who did the same thing:

> *me pia detinuit coniunx, pia mater Achillem* [94].

But this is an obvious sophism: Achilles had to obey his mother, a goddess, Ulysses simply wanted to stay at home. On the whole, Ulysses' speech shows him as a trained and accomplished demagogue, able to turn black into white, dangerous to his surroundings by his intrigues and malice. He is exactly as clever as Ajax had said he would prove to be.—This negative interpretation of Ulysses' speech is the important corrective to Wilkinson's glorification of the intelligent and cultivated Ulysses. There is a balance between the contrasting aspects of the conflict: it is *both* brains against brawn and deceitfulness against openness [95]. Ovid remains neutral when he tells about the decision:

> *Mota manus procerum est, et quid facundia posset,*
> *re patuit, fortisque viri tulit arma disertus* [96].

Ajax' suicide and the metamorphosis of his blood are described in few but pathetic lines. There is no trace of Ajax' traditional madness. His character is the adequate explanation of his reaction. An Ajax could not live on after having lost a contest of arms to a Ulysses [97].

Ulysses provides the transition to the epilogue of the whole Trojan section: he fetches Philoctetes, and at last the war ends with the fall of Troy:

> *imposita estque fero tandem manus ultima bello* [98].

The following passage bears marks of imperfection. The lines:

> *Troia simul Priamusque cadunt! Priameia coniunx*
> *perdidit infelix hominis post omnia formam*
> *externasque novo latratu terruit auras,*
> *longus in angustum qua clauditur Hellespontus* [99]

anticipate the following story and its metamorphosis in a way which has no parallels in the poem. As a matter of fact, it is possible to cut out the *Hecuba*-complex and the *Memnon, i. e.* more than 200 lines, and continue reading at line 623: *Non tamen eversam Trojae cum moenibus esse spem quoque fata sinunt.* I think that at a final revision Ovid would have left out lines 404–407; they seem to be a kind of synopsis. The tragic tale of Hecuba, for which Euripides is ostensibly the model of writing as well as the model of reading [100] starts with an epic tableau in Vergil's manner. With this short passage [101] Ovid reproduces the atmosphere of the second *Aeneid* as the background of the following tale. After this *praeludium* the proper story begins in Ovid's normal manner with a τοποϑεσία, *viz.* of the Thracian Chersonnesus. The antecedents are briefly stated: that Polydorus was committed to King Polymestor who after the fall of Troy killed and robbed the unhappy child and threw him into the sea. Then—with no other transition than the reader's presumed knowledge of the legend—follows Achilles' dreadful appearance and claim that Polyxena be slaughtered to placate his *manes.* From our modern point of view Otis may be right when he brands Ovid's Polyxena, her words and gestures, as stagy and rhetorical, and his statement that Ovid's tale has not the same qualities as Euripides' tragedy can hardly be contradicted. But we know that the Romans could take considerably more in the way of theatrical expressions and behaviour than we can. It should not be forgotten that it was not long after Ovid that Lucan and Seneca in his tragedies could go even further than Ovid in this direction. Apparently the taste for such exaggerated heroism displayed in macabre contexts was a fact upon which Ovid could count—and did count. It seems to be one of the outstanding features of the *Metamorphoses* that there is something for any taste. Some may, however, have found that he overdid the rhetorical ingenuity by the pointed *sententia: dominum matri vix repperit Hector* [102] or broke the illusion by informing the reader that Hecuba's monologue is only an extract of what she really said [103]. Hecuba herself apparently speaks in the same extravagant manner as the rhetor Voticnus Montanus, who, according to the elder Seneca [104], was censured by Mamercus Scaurus as the Ovid among rhetors, because he used to spoil his own *sententiae* by elaboration. As an example Seneca quotes Hecuba's three *sententiae: cinis ipse sepulti in genus hoc saevit* [105]; *tumulo quoque sensimus hostem; Aeacidae fecunda fui* [106]. When Hecuba finds Polydorus' body lying on the shore, her last hope is crushed. No words can now express her pain

> *et pariter vocem lacrimasque introrsus obortas*
> *devorat ipse dolor* [107].

She stands immovable like a hard rock and thus recalls Niobe. But then sorrow gives way to anger and like Progne [108] she becomes totally obsessed by the thought of revenge. There is an epic simile in which Hecuba is compared to a lioness chasing the killer of her suckling cub:

> *Sic Hecube, postquam cum luctu miscuit iram,*
> *non oblita animorum, annorum oblita suorum*
> *vadit ad artificem dirae Polymestora caedis*—

and then follows an Ovidian incongruity of a kind that we have met with before [109]:

> *colloquiumque petit.*

Hecuba's revenge is, of course, an act of justice but so macabre and gory that the readers would almost pity the vilain Polymestor who quite unknowingly falls into this cruel ambush. The metamorphoses of both Ajax and Hecuba resulted from their anger. But how different are not their ends! Ajax' death is noble because it is the only way in which he can remain true to himself and his heroic code of honour, no matter how that might be measured by standards other than his own. Hecuba must suffer and suffer and yet live on until her griefs finally overcome that enduring and pathetic patience which is her real character and make her fight back; by doing so she deteriorates and become *nocens* [110]. The cruelty to which she has for so long time been subjected finally makes her mean and cruel herself. She becomes a dog snapping at the stones which hurt it, *i. e.* the proverbial symbol of blind and useless rage [111]. Her tragic fate moved both friend and foe and all the gods too; even Juno thought that this was too much. Only Aurora did not have time for being moved by anything but her own maternal grief. Here is another example of a transition achieved by means of somebody's non-participation. The fact that Ovid has here permitted himself an obvious break of the chronology shows that the juxtaposition of the two mothers, Hecuba and Aurora, is anything but accidental. As the goddess sees her son Memnon being killed by Achilles she grows pale (as Sol in the *Phaethon* and Lucifer in the *Ceyx and Alcyone*). When Memnon is being cremated she goes to Jupiter. She arrives *crine soluto, sicut erat* [112] and may thus be compared to Alcyone. Her address to Jupiter is revealing: of its thirteen lines she uses the first eight to complain about the fact that she has not received a number of temples, feasts, and altars which she feels she ought to have in consideration of the fine show she produces every morning. But what she asks for now is only some kind of honour for her dead son, something that might comfort her *materna vulnera.* It is sufficiently evident that what she really cares for is her own prestige. Jupiter consents and the ashes from Memnon's pyre become birds who perform a kind of gladiatorial fight in honour of the dead and repeat these *parentalia* every year. The gods had only shown a very cool and uninterested sympathy for Hecuba, who was destroyed as a human being by her sorrows; no intervention was to be expected from their side. Hecuba seems to have been only a subject of conversation among the gods. Aurora with her petty ambition can receive comfort from the King of gods—because her sorrow is not real or serious, when compared to that of Hecuba. Yet her own—comparatively—petty sorrow made her completely blind to Hecuba's tragedy. That is only too human:

> *Ergo aliis latrasse Dymantida flebile visum est,*
> *luctibus est Aurora suis intenta* [113]

but Ovid sees to it that his reader does not get too deeply involved in these problems of the world's morality. He dissolves them with a very Ovidian aetiological and etymological *concetto:*

> *piasque*
> *nunc quoque dat lacrimas et toto* rorat *in orbe.*

The *Memnon* functions not only as a contrast to the *Hecuba* as indicated above; placed as it is at the end of the Trojan section it leads up to the endpiece of the following long complex of stories, which is held together by Aeneas. The scene between Venus and Jupiter [114] constitutes a parallel to and a variation of Aurora's address to Jupiter.

CLASSICA ET MEDIAEVALIA · DISSERTATIONES X

CHANGING FORMS

STUDIES IN THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

BY

OTTO STEEN DUE

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